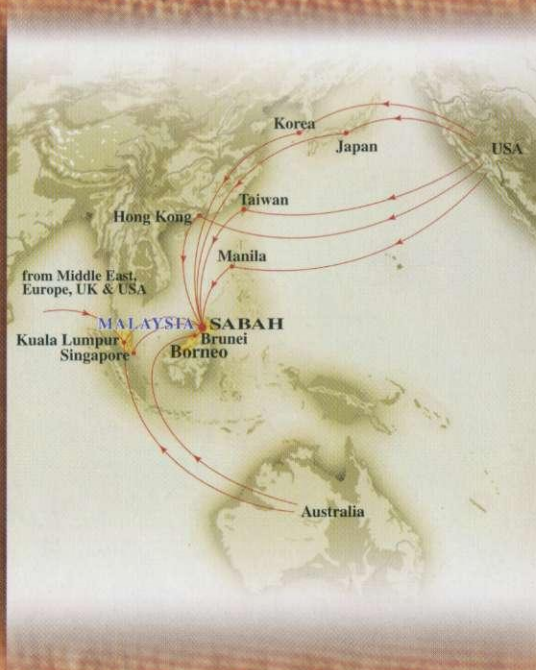


# SABAH

MALAYSIAN BORNEO

ALLURING EAST COAST



VISIT  
**SABAH**  
MALAYSIAN BORNEO

Sabah Tourism Board

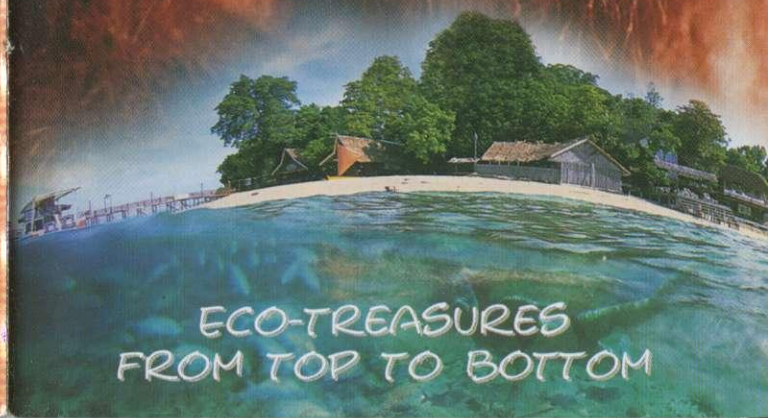
51 Jalan Gaya, 88000 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

Tel: 6088-212121 Fax: 6088-212075

E-mail: [info@sabahtourism.com](mailto:info@sabahtourism.com)

[www.sabahtourism.com](http://www.sabahtourism.com)

*Published by Sabah Tourism Board (June 2003)*



ECO-TREASURES  
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM









# CONTENTS

6 - 7  
WELCOME TO SARAH'S EAST COAST  
~ A NATURE LOVER'S PARADISE.

8 - 13  
SANDAKAN ~ HOW IT ALL BEGUN...

14 - 15  
SWINGING ADVENTURES  
OF THE 'WILD MAN OF BORNEO'  
~ SEPILOK ORANG UTAN SANCTUARY.

16 - 17  
BALLERINAS IN THE SEA  
~ TURTLE ISLANDS PARK.

18 - 19  
PRECIOUS DELICACIES AT DIZZYING HEIGHTS  
~ GOMANTONG CAVES.

20 - 21  
ENDEMIC CREATURES IN WILD TERRAIN  
~ LOWER KINARATANGAN RIVER.

22 - 23  
LUSH WONDERS OF NATURE  
~ DANUM VALLEY CONSERVATION AREA.

24 - 25  
LAHAD DATU  
~ GUARDIAN OF CENTURIES-OLD TREASURES.

26 - 27  
THE TOWN WITH ITS FEET IN THE SEA  
~ SEMPORNA.

28 - 29  
TAWAU ~ ASIA'S COCOA CAPITAL.

30 - 33  
THE WORLD'S TOP DIVE SITES!

34 - 35  
SECLUDED RETREATS.

36 - 37  
HOW TO GET TO SARAH'S EAST COAST.

38  
TIPS ON ECO-PARADISE.

39  
MAP OF SANDAKAN TOWN CENTRE.

While every care has been taken in compiling the contents of this brochure, Sabah Tourism Board cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracy, omission or alteration that may occur. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission from Sabah Tourism is strictly prohibited.



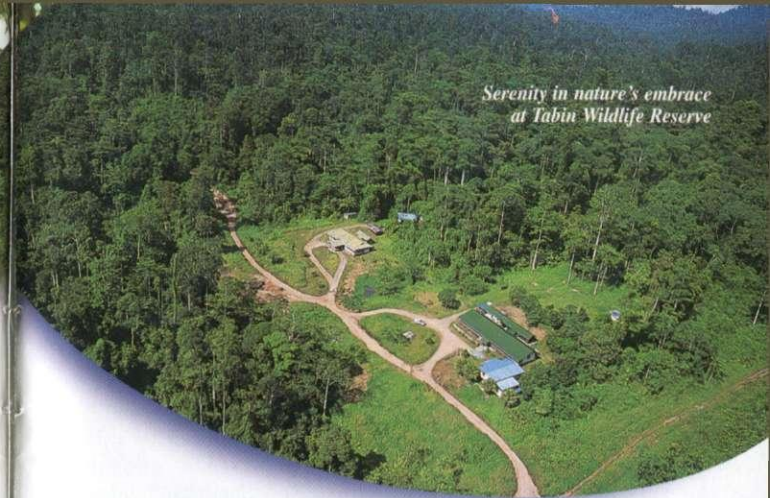
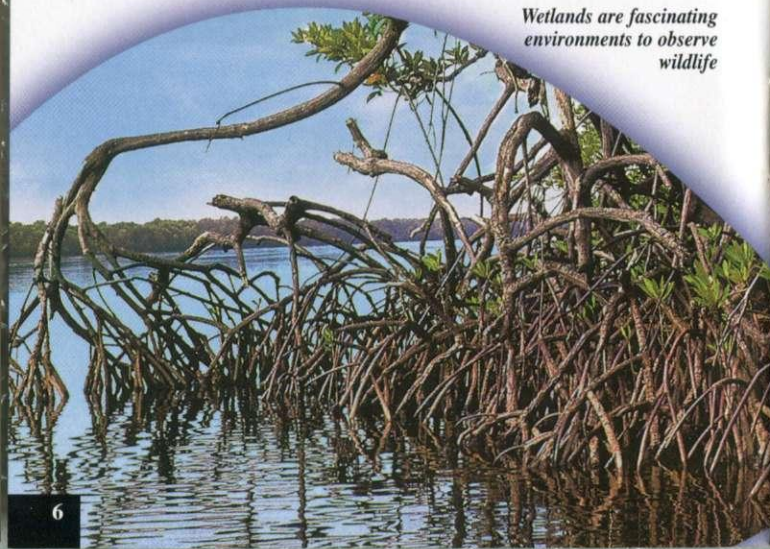


## WELCOME TO SARAH'S EAST COAST ~A NATURE LOVER'S PARADISE.

**H**ow would you like to spend an idyllic holiday in paradise? Come face to face with an orang utan or nesting sea turtle, explore virgin rainforests, relax in a chalet perched over a coral reef, experience some of the world's top dive sites, and see caves where edible birds' nests have been gathered since antiquity, all within easy distance of a capital city?

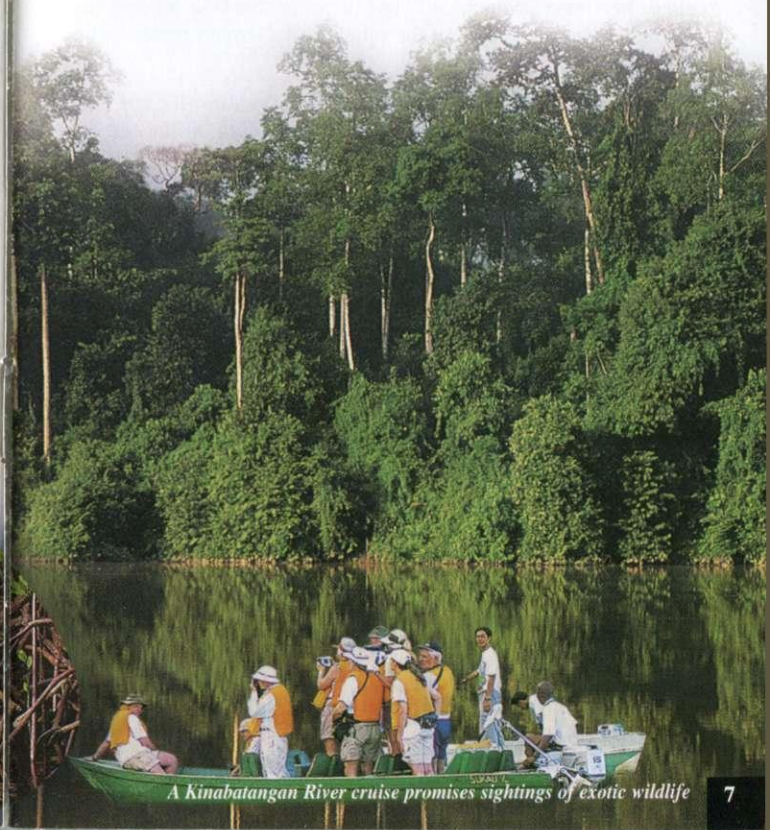
All these treasures, and more, are found along Sabah's East Coast. Less than an hour's flight from Sabah's capital, Kota Kinabalu, is the town of Sandakan, the gateway to the famous Sepilok Orang Utan Sanctuary, Turtle Islands, and Kinabatangan wetlands. One of the richest and most accessible wildlife regions in all of Southeast Asia, the Kinabatangan is home to a plethora of birds and animals like the unique proboscis monkey, found only in Borneo.

*Wetlands are fascinating  
environments to observe  
wildlife*



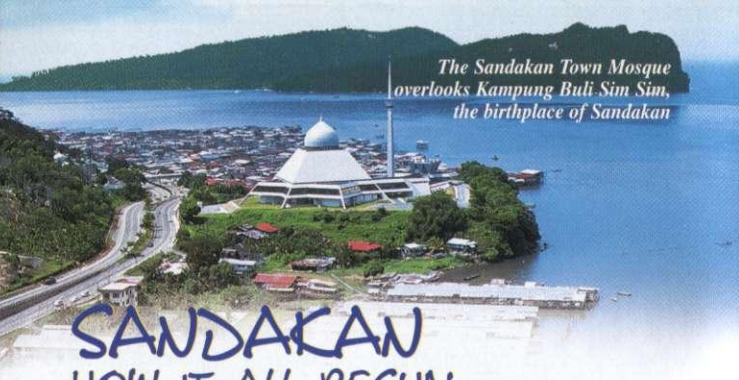
*Serenity in nature's embrace  
at Tabin Wildlife Reserve*

The complex beauty of the lowland rainforest can be discovered from the comfort of a lodge set in the heart of the Danum Valley Conservation Area, reached via the town of Lahad Datu. Set amidst rich agricultural lands, is Tawau, the Cocoa Capital of Asia. To the north is the coastal town of Semporna, where people once known as Sea Gypsies come to town and the call of the sea draws divers from all the world.



*A Kinabatangan River cruise promises sightings of exotic wildlife*





*The Sandakan Town Mosque  
overlooks Kampung Buli Sim Sim,  
the birthplace of Sandakan*


## SANDAKAN HOW IT ALL REGUN...

“Sandakan” is derived from the Suluk word “sanda” meaning, to pawn and “kan” being the suffix. So “Sandakan” means the place that was pawned. Who pawned it, and to whom, remains a mystery.

As the story goes, in the early 1870s, William Clarke Cowie, a Scottish adventurer and engineer, delivered guns and ammunitions to the Sultan of Sulu, then protecting his territory from Spanish conquerors. In return, Cowie was granted permission by the Sultan to set up base on Pulau Timbang, in Sandakan Bay, where a small Suluk village existed. Cowie called his base “Sandakan” but it soon became known as “Kampung German” due to the number of German traders who visited Cowie.

The settlement was re-located to Buli Sim Sim in 1879. It was an uninhabited jungle and mangrove area but with one of the most beautiful natural harbours in the world. He named the new settlement, “Elopura” meaning “The Beautiful City” but the name reverted to “Sandakan”.

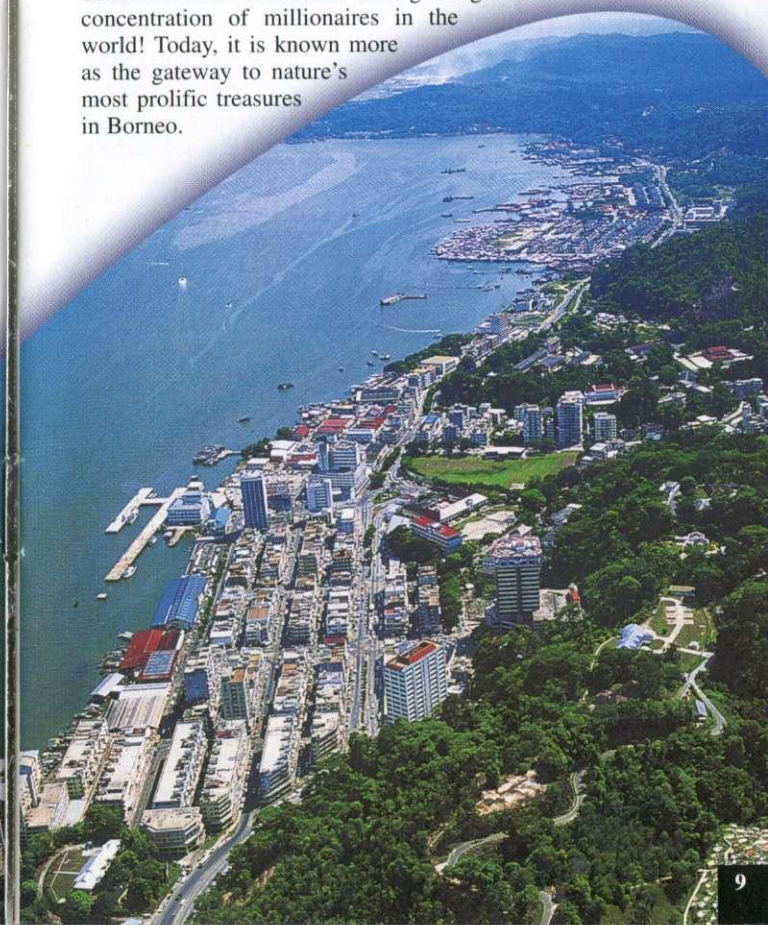
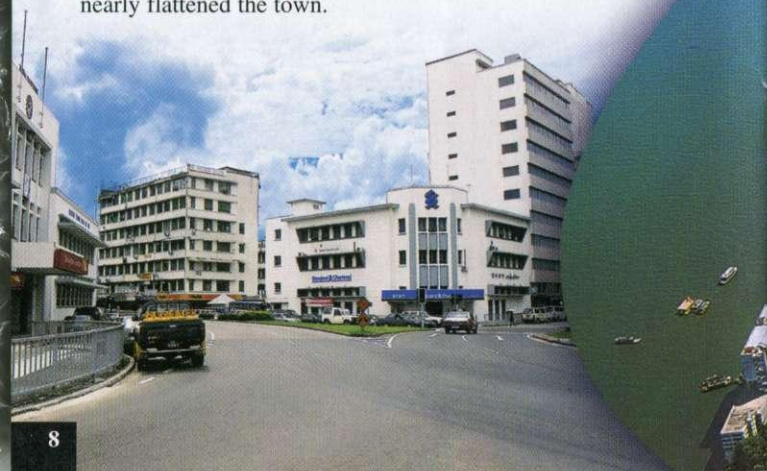
In 1883, the British North Borneo Chartered Company moved its capital from Kudat to Sandakan. A “building mania” started and Sandakan became a bustling modern town though Allied bombings to liberate it towards the end of World War 2 nearly flattened the town.



*A monument to William Pryer,  
the founding father  
of modern Sandakan*

In retaliation, the Japanese burnt whatever remained and Sandakan as a town, ceased to exist in June 1945. In 1946, the capital was moved to Jesselton (subsequently, renamed Kota Kinabalu).

Sandakan was first and foremost a port for the export of logs and timber. In fact, it was said that Sandakan timber went into the building of Peking's Temple of Heaven. In its heyday, Sandakan used to boast of having the greatest concentration of millionaires in the world! Today, it is known more as the gateway to nature's most prolific treasures in Borneo.







Sandakan's prosperity led to an influx of people. Chinese, Europeans, Malays, Dayaks, Dusuns, Sikhs, Pathans, Arabs, Filipinos, Suluks, Javanese and even Japanese. One of the earliest Chinese immigrants was Kwan Woon Kwong, a general merchant, who established the oldest company of Sandakan, the Man Woo Loong Company in 1882.

#### *Tham Kung Temple*

Situated at Mile 1.5 Jalan Utara, this century-old temple was built around 1894. Its uniqueness lies in its "preservation of a temple within a temple" as conservation efforts had literally lifted the old temple and transferred it to within the new temple, a first in Malaysia.

#### *Sam Sing Kung Chinese Temple*

Situated at the edge of the town padang, The Three Saint's Temple is the oldest building in Sandakan. The three saints are Kwan Woon Cheung – saint of righteousness; the goddess of Tin Hou, worshipped by fishermen and seamen for protection, and the Min Cheong Emperor, worshipped by those who seek success in examinations (even to this day!). Four Chinese communities got together and started the temple: the Cantonese, Teochew, Hakkas and the Hainanese. In the temple is a plate inscribed with the names of all those who gave more than RM2. The bell donated by the first Kapitan Cina of Sandakan, Fung Ming Shan can still be seen in the Temple today.

*Where scholars worship –  
the Sam Sing Kung  
Chinese Temple*



*A must-visit in Sandakan –  
the Puu Jih Shih Buddhist Temple*

#### *Puu Jih Shih Buddhist Temple*

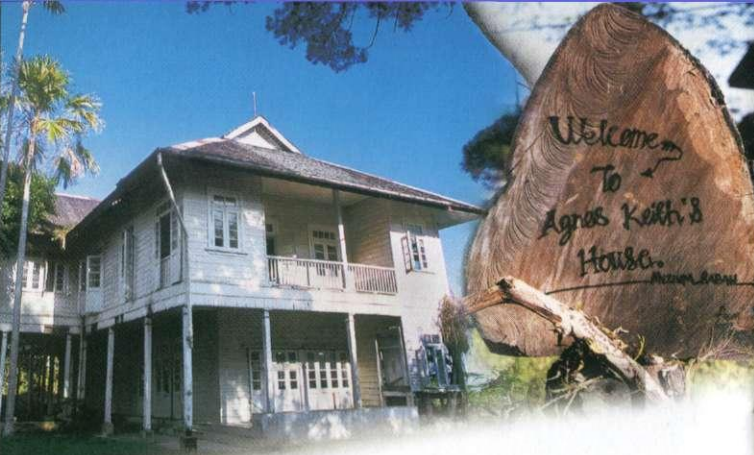
Situated on the hilltop above Tanah Merah, south of Sandakan town centre, the temple was built in 1987 at a cost of about RM7 million. From here, you can catch a breathtaking view of Sandakan Bay. The extravagantly ornate temple is a blaze of red and gold, with writhing dragons, gold-gilded Buddhas, hundreds of gleaming lamps and the fragrance of burning incense. It is said that the temple protects and brings good-health and wealth to Sandakan and its people.

#### *The Australian Memorial*

Located at Mile 8, Jalan Labuk Utara, this RM750,000 Memorial is dedicated to some 2,700 Australian prisoners of war (POWs) and others who died at the Sandakan POW camp and death marches in North Borneo during World War 2. The Memorial comprises three Memorial Cairns within the Park, a Commemorative Pavilion and the Sandakan Memorial.







### *Agnes Keith's House*

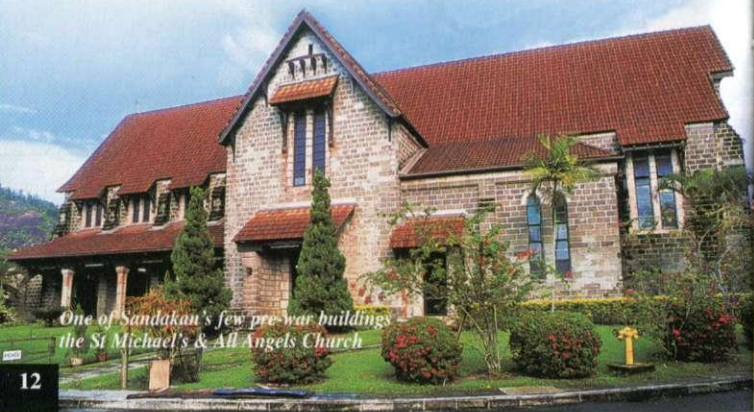
Another link with the past can be found in Agnes Keith's house. Situated on a hill at Jalan Istana overlooking Sandakan Bay, it was the home of Conservator of Forests, Harry Keith and his American wife, Agnes Keith, a writer, from the 1930s until 1942. Agnes' book on life in pre-war Sandakan popularised the old seafarer's name for Sabah in its title, "Land Below the Wind" (referring to Sabah's location just below the typhoon belt). Her second book, *Three Came Home*, about their war experiences was made into a movie. Their two-storied wooden bungalow, built on a ridge overlooking the town, was destroyed during WW2 but reconstructed when the Keiths returned in 1946. Conservation and rebuilding of the house is in progress.

### *Masjid Jamek*

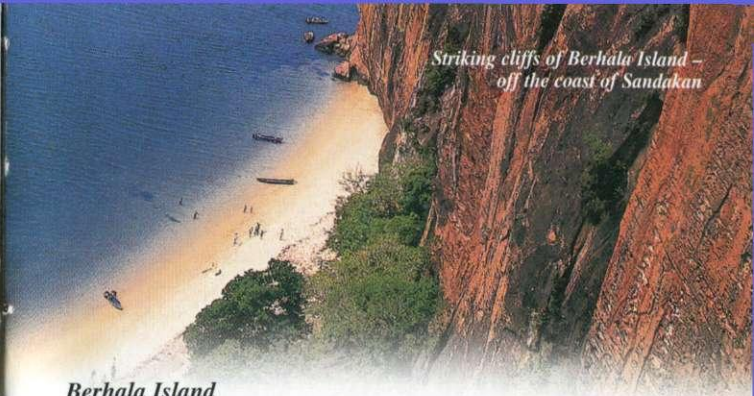
This mosque sits on the hilltop overlooking the town centre. Its quaint architecture was designed based on a harmony of islamic elements.

### *St Michael's & All Angels Church*

Situated at Elton Hill, this beautiful granite church was built in 1893 and took 20 years to complete. The church was constructed with granite found at Buli Sim Sim.



One of Sandakan's few pre-war buildings  
the St Michael's & All Angels Church



Striking cliffs of Berhala Island -  
off the coast of Sandakan

### *Berhala Island*

Situated in Sandakan Bay, this beautiful forested island has striking, prominent cliffs at its northern end and also had a small leper settlement colony. During WW2, Berhala became the camps for civilian internees and POWs. A story was told of an escape, when eight prisoners being taken to the mainland made their break at Berhala via the leper colony. They swam to the sheer walls of the Berhala cliffs and with help from natives, escaped to freedom. Each year, some families of the Australian POWs make their pilgrimage to this seemingly peaceful island to retrace that dramatic journey.

### *Japanese Cemetery*

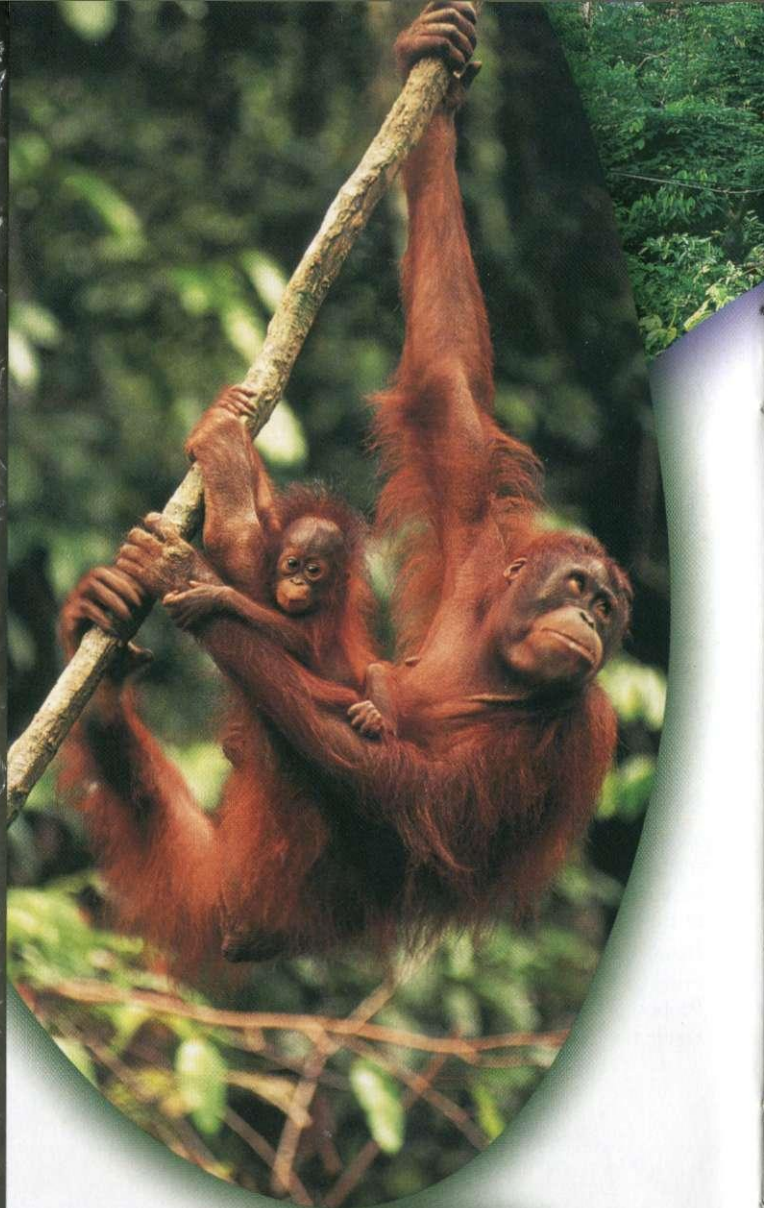
The Cemetery at Jalan Istana has a monument and the remains of Japanese soldiers who died during World War 2, plus some Japanese women who worked, lived and died in Sandakan.

*The Central Market* is where locals come to buy fresh produce, fruits, delicacies and crafts, sarongs and seashells. The fish market here is perhaps the biggest in Sabah and offers a stunning array of fresh seafood.

*Other places of interest* include the Crocodile Farm and Forestry Headquarters at Labuk Road and the Labuk Bay Proboscis Sanctuary, situated on a 400-acre mangrove forest inside the Yet Hing Oil Palm Plantation.







## SWINGING ADVENTURES OF THE 'WILD MAN OF BORNEO' ~SEPILOK ORANG UTAN SANCTUARY.

Orang utans have long fascinated mankind. Known scientifically as *Pongo Pygmaeus*, they have been found to be 96.4% similar to our human genes!

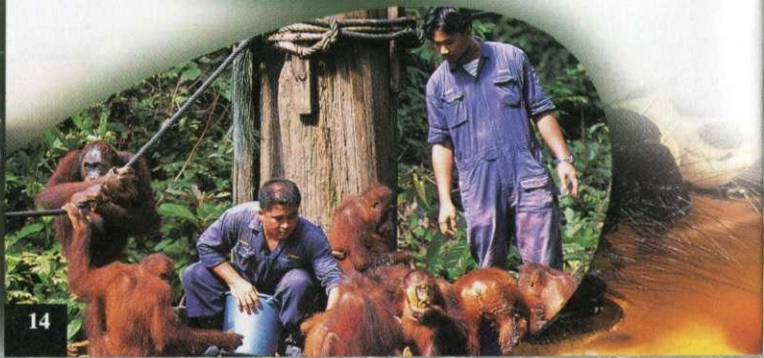
Gentle and shy by nature, sightings of orang utan in the wild are rare. The world's largest orang utan (Man of the Forest) sanctuary is just 40 minutes away from downtown Sandakan. To visit, take a taxi or 'Sepilok' buses from the station near Central Market in Sandakan.

The Sanctuary started in 1964 for rehabilitation of orphaned baby orang utans from logging-sites, plantations and illegal hunting, returning them to the wilds as soon as they're ready. More than 4,500 hectares of virgin jungle were designated as forest reserve and sanctuary for these charming creatures.

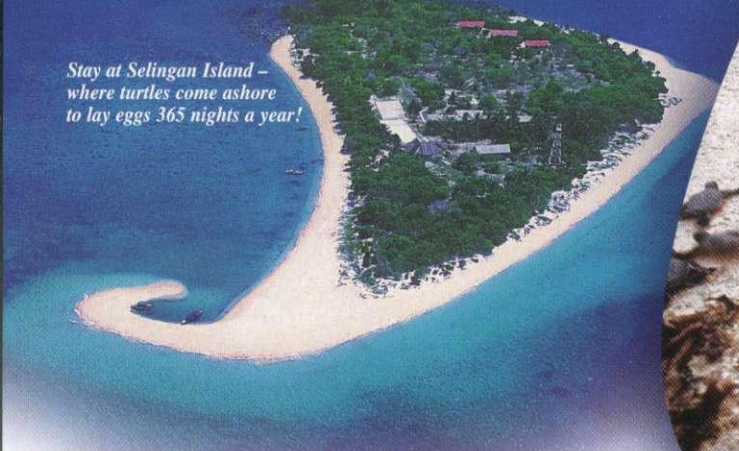
Touching these creatures is discouraged to prevent the spread of human diseases to the creatures. There are some who have grown so fond of human company that they refuse to return to the wilds. Other semi-wild orang utans come to the Sanctuary twice daily from the forest for feedings of milk and bananas.

There is a minimal Conservation/Entrance fee payable at the Registration Centre. Feeding Time: 10:00 am and 3:00 pm.

If you would like to stay overnight to observe these creatures further, accommodation is available outside the sanctuary.







Stay at Selingan Island -  
where turtles come ashore  
to lay eggs 365 nights a year!

## BALLERINAS IN THE SEA ~TURTLE ISLANDS PARK.

One and a half hour's by boat and 40 km. north of Sandakan in the Sulu Sea, lies Sabah's third Marine Park, one of the most important turtle breeding spots in South East Asia. Designated as a Marine Park, the islands of Selingan, Bakungan Kecil and Gulisan are safe haven for the endangered Green Turtles and Hawksbill Turtles. Strangely, these turtles only lay their eggs in their original birthplace. So after over 30 years of turtle conservation, the success is now clearly evident as more turtles make their pilgrimage every year.

Dive into these waters and marvel at how the turtles are like ballerinas floating amidst the corals, foraging for food before their next breath of air. At night, crouch quietly as park rangers point out the turtles laying their eggs. It's a slow sand digging, laying and burying ritual that they go through before making their way back into the waters. Park rangers then carefully transfer 100 over odd eggs into a safe haven for monitoring, before hatching and subsequent release into the sea.



An overnight stay on Selingan Island is recommended for a rare glimpse of these turtles laying eggs. Arrangements can be made with local tour agents, while independent travellers may contact the number below.

**Managing Director (Mr George Tseu)**  
**Crystal Quest Sdn Bhd**

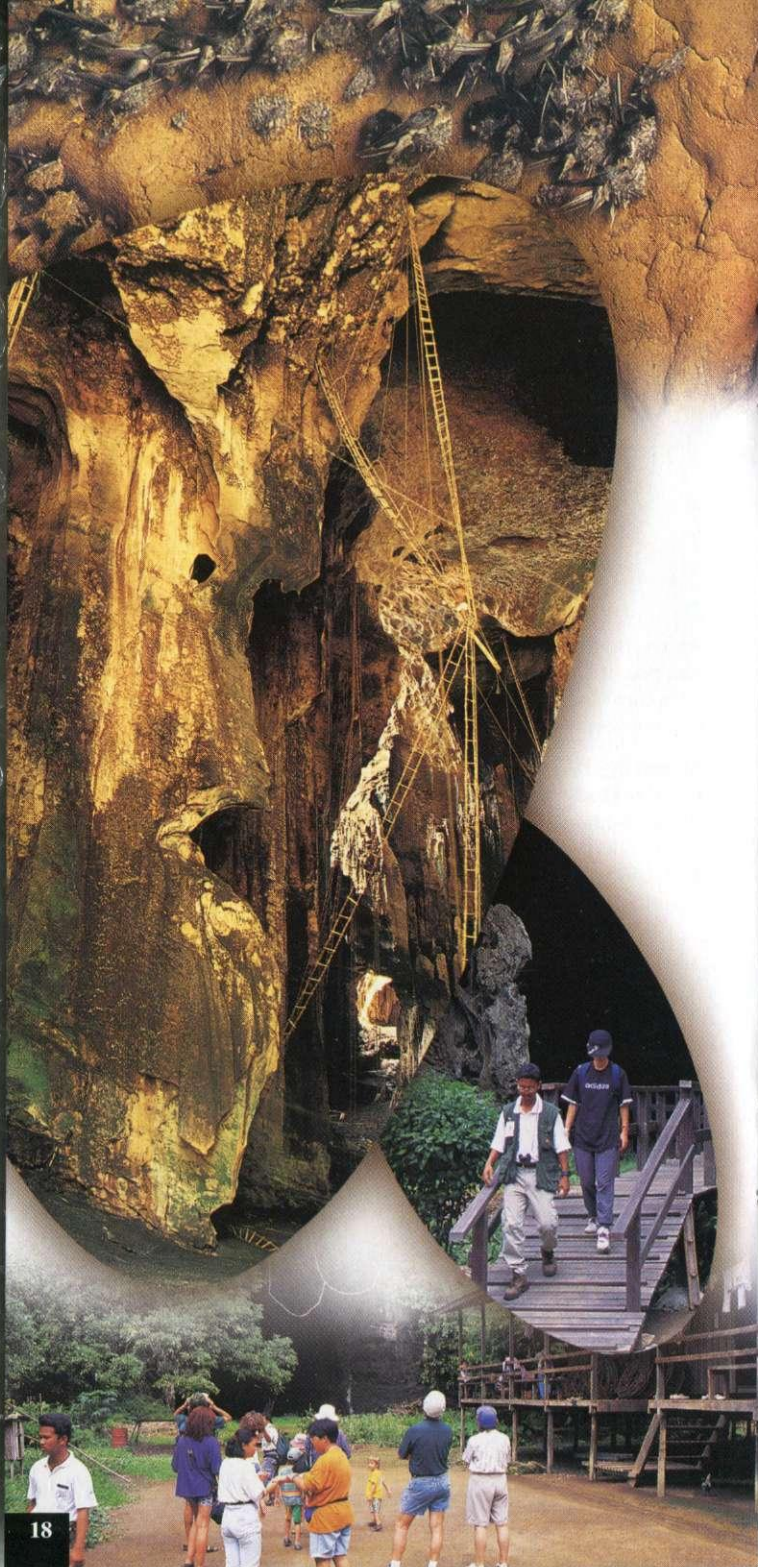
Wisma Khoo Siak Chiew, 12th Floor, Room 848  
90709 Sandakan

Tel: (089) 212711 Fax: (089) 212712

E-mail: [cquest@tm.net.my](mailto:cquest@tm.net.my)







## PRECIOUS DELICACIES AT DIZZYING HEIGHTS ~GOMANTONG CAVES.

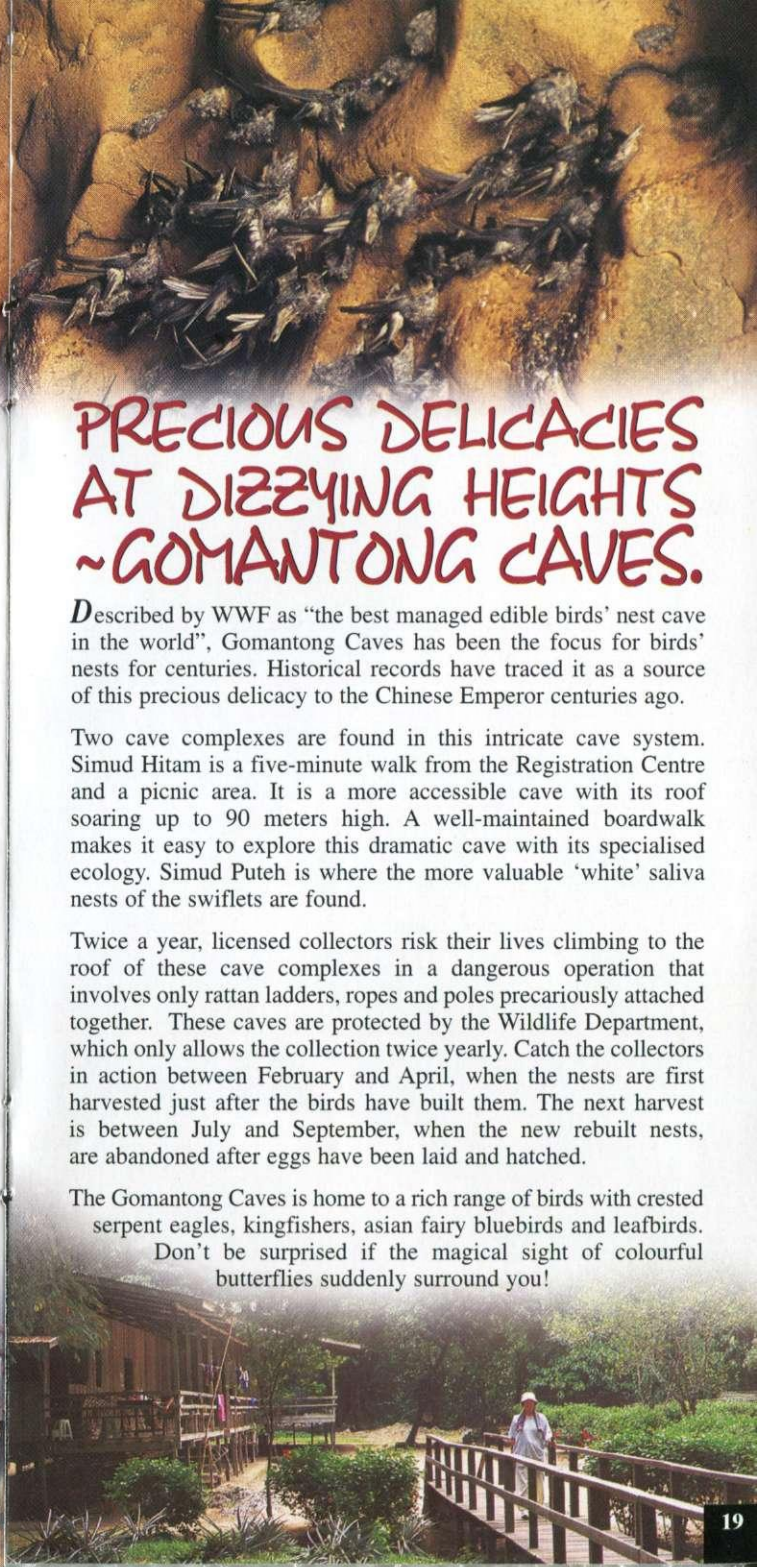
Described by WWF as “the best managed edible birds’ nest cave in the world”, Gomantong Caves has been the focus for birds’ nests for centuries. Historical records have traced it as a source of this precious delicacy to the Chinese Emperor centuries ago.

Two cave complexes are found in this intricate cave system. Simud Hitam is a five-minute walk from the Registration Centre and a picnic area. It is a more accessible cave with its roof soaring up to 90 meters high. A well-maintained boardwalk makes it easy to explore this dramatic cave with its specialised ecology. Simud Puteh is where the more valuable ‘white’ saliva nests of the swiftlets are found.

Twice a year, licensed collectors risk their lives climbing to the roof of these cave complexes in a dangerous operation that involves only rattan ladders, ropes and poles precariously attached together. These caves are protected by the Wildlife Department, which only allows the collection twice yearly. Catch the collectors in action between February and April, when the nests are first harvested just after the birds have built them. The next harvest is between July and September, when the new rebuilt nests, are abandoned after eggs have been laid and hatched.

The Gomantong Caves is home to a rich range of birds with crested serpent eagles, kingfishers, asian fairy bluebirds and leafbirds.

Don’t be surprised if the magical sight of colourful butterflies suddenly surround you!







## ENDEMIC CREATURES IN WILD TERRAIN ~LOWER KINABATANGAN RIVER

It is said that the Chinese Imperial merchants sailed up the Kinabatangan River in search of the precious bird's nests. Its floodplain is one of the most exceptional areas in Malaysia. Influenced by the tides of the Sulu Sea and rainfall in the interior, the lower part of the river plain floods regularly. Thus over the centuries, 5 distinct habitats have evolved, waterlogged and dry forests, saline and freshwater swamps and limestone forests, each contributing towards some of the most diverse concentrations of wildlife in Borneo.

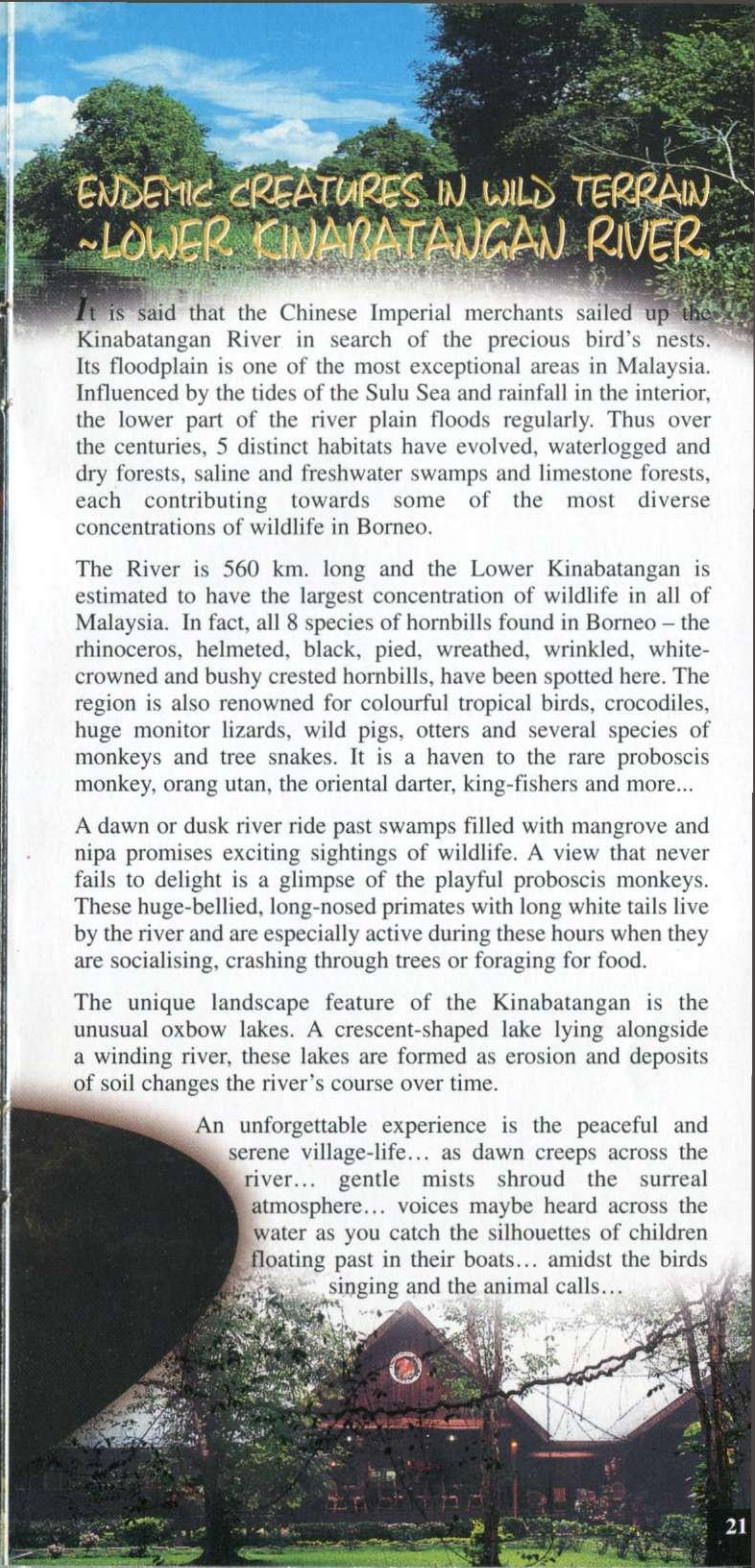
The River is 560 km. long and the Lower Kinabatangan is estimated to have the largest concentration of wildlife in all of Malaysia. In fact, all 8 species of hornbills found in Borneo – the rhinoceros, helmeted, black, pied, wreathed, wrinkled, white-crowned and bushy crested hornbills, have been spotted here. The region is also renowned for colourful tropical birds, crocodiles, huge monitor lizards, wild pigs, otters and several species of monkeys and tree snakes. It is a haven to the rare proboscis monkey, orang utan, the oriental darter, king-fishers and more...

A dawn or dusk river ride past swamps filled with mangrove and nipa promises exciting sightings of wildlife. A view that never fails to delight is a glimpse of the playful proboscis monkeys. These huge-bellied, long-nosed primates with long white tails live by the river and are especially active during these hours when they are socialising, crashing through trees or foraging for food.

The unique landscape feature of the Kinabatangan is the unusual oxbow lakes. A crescent-shaped lake lying alongside a winding river, these lakes are formed as erosion and deposits of soil changes the river's course over time.

An unforgettable experience is the peaceful and serene village-life... as dawn creeps across the river... gentle mists shroud the surreal atmosphere... voices maybe heard across the water as you catch the silhouettes of children floating past in their boats... amidst the birds singing and the animal calls...

*"... keen observers have spotted as many as 70 species of birds in a single afternoon in Lower Kinabatangan" ~ WWF*







## LUSH WONDERS OF NATURE ~DANUM VALLEY CONSERVATION AREA.



One of the last remaining reserves of primary lowland rainforest, this 438 sq. km. area is said to have the world's most complex eco-system. Home to over 275 bird species, numerous reptiles, amphibians, fishes and insects, its uniqueness lies in the dipterocarp forests covering over 90% of the area, a haven for various indigenous plant species and over 110 mammals, including the rare Sumatran rhino, clouded leopard, orang utan and proboscis monkeys.

An untouched paradise in the heart of the natural world, it is located 80 km. inland from Lahad Datu. A journey by car takes 2 hours but permits have to be obtained beforehand. A better alternative would be to arrange for transport with local tour agents.

Overnight stays are advised to better appreciate the variety of wildlife. Viewing platforms and the 27-metre high tree-top canopy walkway give a majestic view of the forest and is perfect for bird-watching. Engage an experienced guide to lead you on a night drive in search of nocturnal creatures or to trek over the 50 km. of hiking trail through forest and riverine habitats.

A nominal fee that contributes toward conservation activities is charged upon entrance to Danum Valley.

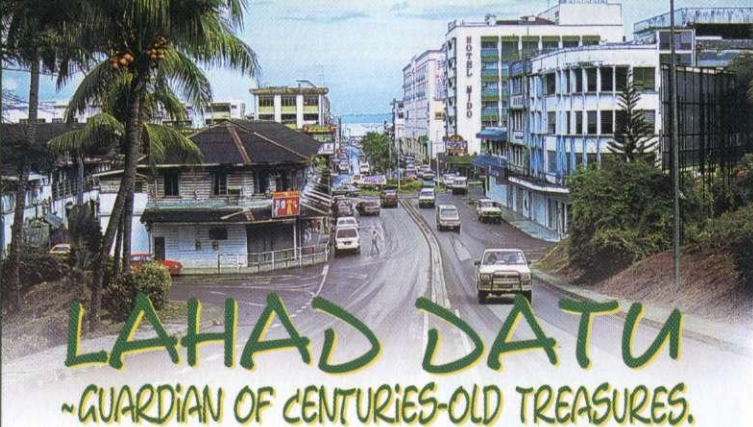
**Contact:**

**Borneo Nature Tours Sdn Bhd**

Tel: 089-880 207 / 880 206 Fax: 089-885 051

E-mail: [ijl@po.jaring.my](mailto:ijl@po.jaring.my)



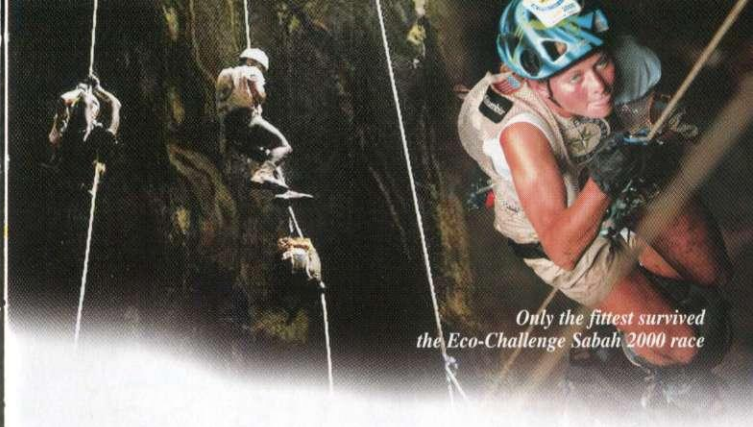


## LAHAD DATU

—GUARDIAN OF CENTURIES-OLD TREASURES.

Lahad Datu is basically a planters' town, surrounded by miles of cocoa and oil palm plantations. It is also the gateway to the virgin rainforests of the renowned Danum Valley Conservation Area, the Tabin Wildlife Reserve in the east and Madai Caves further south. A settlement is said to have existed here as early as the 15th century as excavations have unearthed potteries confirming contact with the imperial dynasties of China. Just east of Lahad Datu, lies the village of Tunku, which achieved notoriety as the base of Illanum pirates and slave traders in the 19th century. In August 2000, Eco-Challenge Sabah 2000, the world's toughest adventure race, covered areas like Silam, Danum Valley and Madai. Hundreds of international media and professional support teams from all over the world converged at Lahad Datu, the gateway to pristine rainforests wonders that has wowed many a celebrity and royalty. One may drive to Lahad Datu, it's a leisurely 6-hour drive or take a 40-minute flight from Kota Kinabalu. From Sandakan, it takes about 2 1/2 hours by road.

**The Tabin Wildlife Reserve** occupies a large part of the peninsula forming the northern arm of Darvel Bay. Large mammals such as the endangered rhinoceros, elephants and wild oxes still roam about freely here. Tabin has several intriguing mud volcanoes that provide mineral salts for the wild animals. Efforts are being made to provide some basic facilities for visitors at these popular look-out spots.



Only the fittest survived  
the Eco-Challenge Sabah 2000 race

**Madai Caves** is another important place for birds' nests. The village at the entrance of the largest cave comes alive twice a year when the Idahan community comes to harvest the birds' nests from various parts of the caves. It is a special communal event, almost like a festival. The harvesting is a dramatic event with the men risking their lives to prise precious nests from the cave roof. Nowadays, the harvesters are hired. The Idahans have held their rights to the Madai Caves for over 20 generations.

In August 2000, after offering special sacrifices and prayers, the Idahans gave permission for the teams of the world's toughest endurance race, the Eco-Challenge Sabah 2000, to enter the Caves, climb the rattan-ladders and do the flying fox from its summit, down to the jungles below.

To visit the Caves, permission must be obtained from the Idahan elders. Visitors may visit the District Office in Lahad Datu town to make prior arrangements for entrance permission on their behalf.

**Tingkeyu & Baturong** ~ On the east of the road linking Lahad Datu with Semporna and Tawau, are several stark white limestone outcrops. Recent discoveries have led archaeologists to believe that cavemen lived in this region as early as 20,000 years ago around the shores of Lake Tingkeyu. When the lake drained dry, they moved to the limestone massif of Baturong and eventually shifted further east to the Madai Caves.







## THE TOWN WITH ITS FEET IN THE SEA ~SEMPORNA.

In the Bajau and Malay language, "semporna" literally means, "perfect". The town with its feet in the sea, Semporna and its many islands are like a dream come true... pure white sandy beaches, coconut palms and tranquil waters lapping over colourful reefs in the beautiful turquoise waters of the Sulawesi Sea. The richness of the sea, fishes of all kinds, sea cucumbers, shells, pearls and in recent years, seaweed farming – all these have attracted seafarers and fisher-folks to Semporna and its islands.

The early Bajau people lived their entire lives aboard their boats. Today, most live along the coasts, perched on stilts over shallow reefs, where they continue their love affair with the sea. Every April, Semporna celebrates with a Regatta Lepa. Thousands sail into town in all kinds of boats including the gaily-decorated lepa and jungkong, their traditional boats, to compete for prizes. Arrangements can be made to explore the islands off Semporna to visit water-villages and seaweed farms, swim and snorkel. The Semporna people also boasts they have the best seafood in all of Malaysia, the freshest and least expensive!

Semporna is the departure point to the world's best dive sites and island-resorts of Sipadan, Mabul and Kapalai.







# TAWAU

## ~ASIA'S COCOA CAPITAL.

Tawau was once a small coastal fishing village under the Sultan of Sulu until it was ceded to the North Borneo Company in 1878. Now a bustling town for the cocoa and palm oil plantations industry, it is the industry leader in terms of research and development of cocoa. Visitors to Tawau must visit the cocoa estate at Quoin Hill to see a 'chocolate' tree and tour the factory to learn the fascinating story of cocoa. In fact, the crop is so important that every year, a Cocoa Festival is held, featuring colourful cultural dances.

Aside from its cocoa attractions, the town is also famous for its seafood, exported to Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and West Malaysia. The new Central Market on Jalan Dunlop near the harbour is renowned for prawns and fish. An interesting Street Market is held every Sunday morning on the corner of Jalan Apas and Jalan Kuhara. The open-air night stalls opposite the Sabindo Shopping Complex on Jalan Chen Fook is also another favourite.



As the southern-most town and main port of entry for Indonesian traders and migrant-workers, Tawau also enjoys a thriving barter trade-economy and import of products from across the border.

**The Tawau Hills Park** was gazetted in 1979 primarily to protect and preserve the beauty of Merotai, Tawau and Balung rivers, covering nearly 28,000 hectares. The Park has several waterfalls, rivers and a natural hot spring, as well as trails through the forest where you'll find a variety of orchids, monkeys and hornbills.

**Shan Sui Golf & Country Club** ~ 15 km. from Tawau town, this magnificent hideaway has a 18-hole championship golf course designed by Nelson & Haworth. It is acclaimed to be their finest creation in Asia. US Golf Magazine ranked Hole 15 – the Creek, one of the Best 500 holes & Top 250 par 4s in the world!





*Pulau Bohey Dulang, a volcanic island near Sipadan, is located just off the coast of Semporna.*



## THE WORLD'S TOP DIVE SITES!

Sabah is blessed with some of the most beautiful islands, coral reefs and atolls. The clear waters and exotic treasures of marine life found here have captivated visitors and divers from all over the world

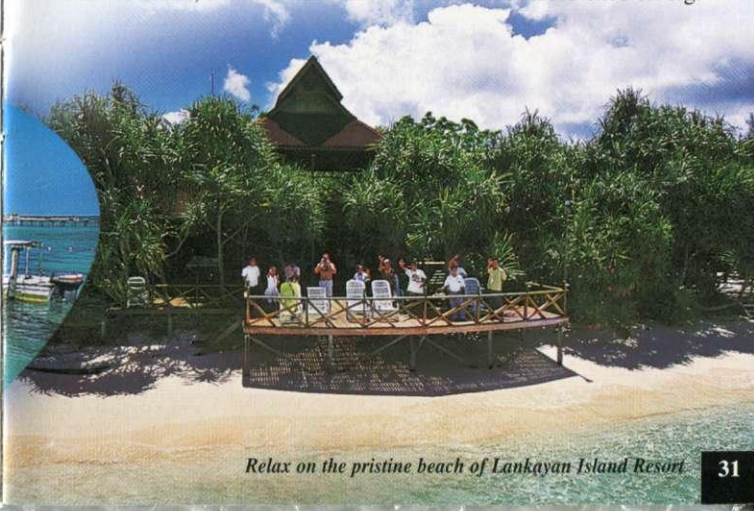
**Lankayan Island** ~ located in the Sulu Sea, the northeast coast of Sandakan. This is a small island paradise with only one dive resort, surrounded by stretches of white sandy beaches, swaying casuarinas and beautiful sunsets.

Described as a true macro-world paradise, there are also larger marine creatures such as leopard sharks, marbled stingray and giant grouper as well as schools of bumphead parrotfish, yellowtail barracuda and scads. Nearby is the Turtle Islands Park, so the hawksbill and green turtles are also 'visitors' in its dive sites.

**Mabul Island** ~ situated only about 15 minutes by speedboat from Sipadan, Mabul is recognised as one of the world's best "muck-diving" sites, one of the richest single destinations for exotic small marine life in the world. Flamboyant cuttlefish, blue-ringed octopus, mimic octopus, gobies and frogfishes are everywhere, as are moray, snake eels and practically the whole scorpionfish family. There's no doubt about it, Mabul is a magical macro site! The beauty of Mabul and Kapalai will also appeal greatly to non-divers as well. There are two resorts on Mabul Island, with the third resort an off-shore refurbished oil-rig.




*Where divers set off for spectacular diving at Sipadan Island*



*Relax on the pristine beach of Lankayan Island Resort*





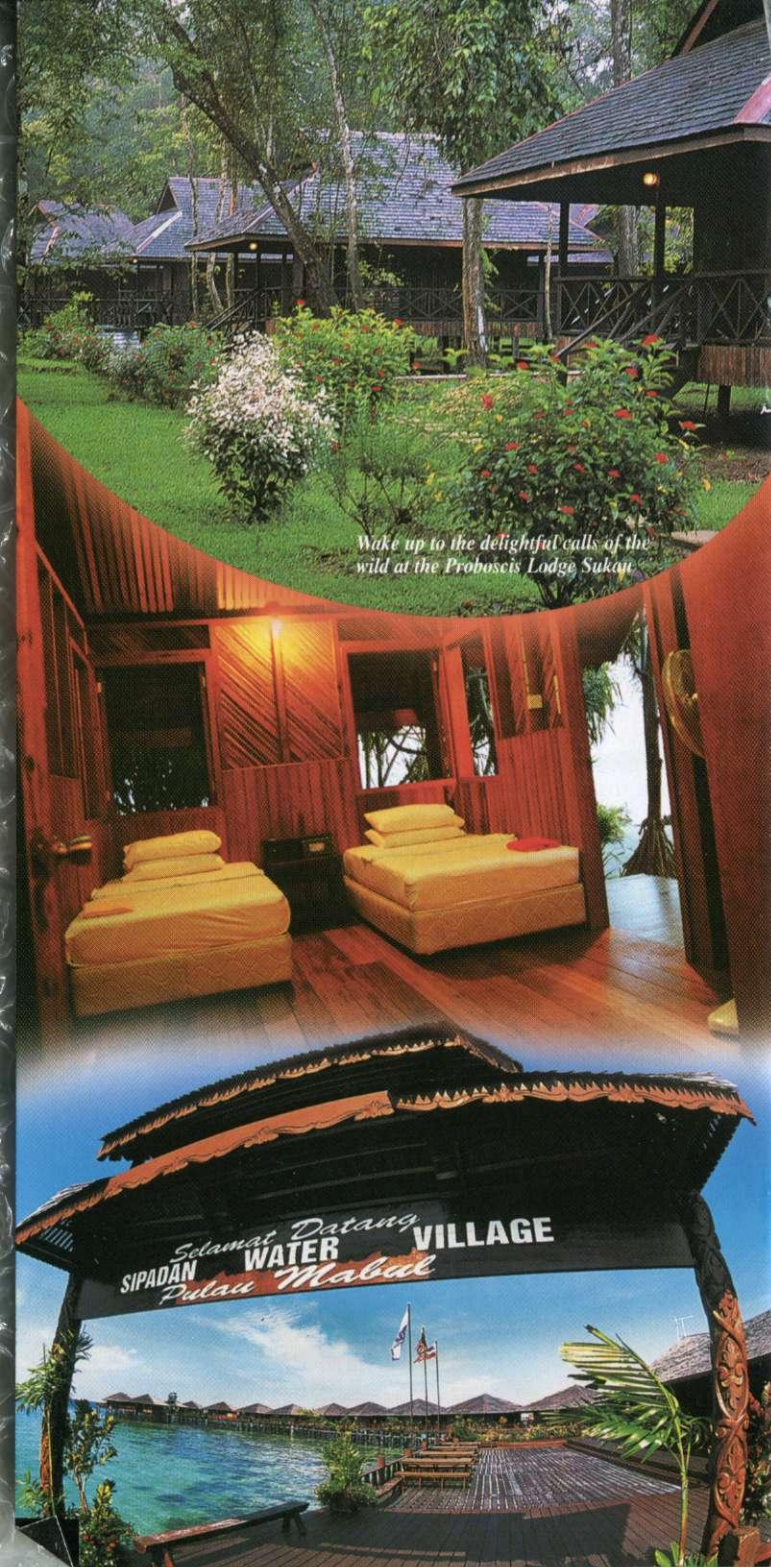
**Sipadan** ~ rated as the world's top dive sites. For the true diving enthusiast, the island needs no introduction. Praised by the internationally renowned oceanographer and filmmaker Jacques Cousteau as one of the best diving spots in the world, it is unique as the only oceanic island in Malaysia. Its geographic position puts Sipadan in the centre of the richest marine habitat in the world, the heart of the Indo-Pacific basin. Sipadan rises 600 m. from the seabed to provide spectacular wall dives and underwater garden. More than 3,000 species of fish and hundreds of coral species have been classified in this richest of ecosystem. Sipadan is also renowned for its unusually large numbers of green and hawksbill turtles, which gather there to mate and nest. It is not unusual to see more than 20 turtles on each dive. Another unique feature to divers is the turtle tomb that contains many skeletal remains of turtles. The residential schooling barracuda and big-eye trevally are one of the highlights on every diver's Wish-list, which often gather in thousands forming spectacular tornado-like formations. Mantas, eagle-rays, scalloped hammerhead sharks and whale sharks may also be seen, as well as an abundance of macro life. For sustainable-conservation purpose, Sipadan is presently, open to only 80 guests at any one time. There are six resorts on Sipadan.



**Kapalai Reef** ~ actually a sand bar, Kapalai sits on top of the Ligitan Reefs. The sole resort is built water-village-style. Together with Mabul and Langkayan, Kapalai offers some of the best "muck-diving" in the world. Flamboyant cuttlefish, blue-ringed octopus, sea moths and mating mandarinfish, giant frogfish, ribbon eels, harlequin ghost pipefish and crab-eye gobies are found right by the jetty! While the abundance of other marine life like the various gobies, ambonian shrimps, mantis shrimps, crocodilefish, lionfish and scorpionfish, are usually almost ignored as being too common here!







*Wake up to the delightful calls of the wild at the Proboscis Lodge Sukay*

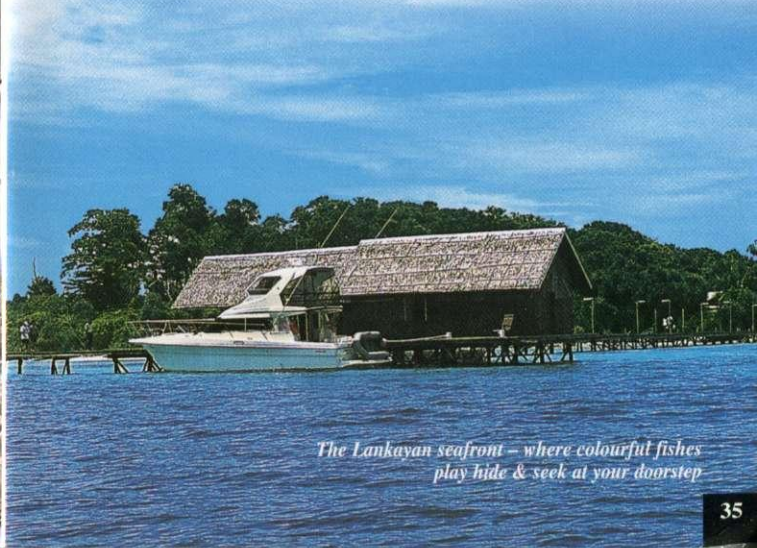


## SECLUDED RETREATS.

Sabah's East Coast offers all types of accommodation facilities. From 5-star resorts in acclaimed diving spots to luxury retreats surrounded by centuries-old rainforests, to simple, quaint chalets fronting secluded beaches.

When it comes to food, it's a culinary wonderland in Sabah. Local delicacies and international cuisine are aplenty with hawker stalls or local coffee shops serving piping hot food or enter the gourmet's paradise in award winning restaurants. Continental cuisine can be found in most hotels.

As Sabah's coastline is embraced by several seas, it is no surprise that you will find the freshest and biggest seafood served. Deliciously prepared by chefs, no cooking can beat the fresh taste of seafood just caught off the waters. Get prepared for a gastronomic delight!



*The Lankayan seafront – where colourful fishes play hide & seek at your doorstep*





## HOW TO GET TO SARAH'S EAST COAST.

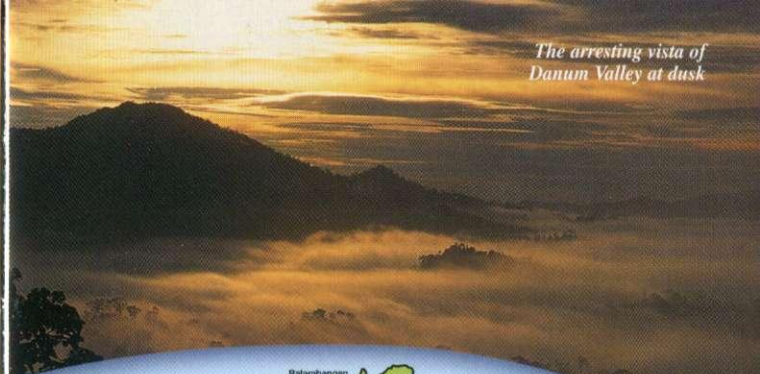
The Kota Kinabalu International Airport is serviced by most international airlines, getting direct international air links from Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, Seoul, Brunei, Taipei, Kaoshiung, Manila, Cebu, as well as Malaysia's capital city, Kuala Lumpur and nearby Kuching, Sarawak.

Several daily flights link Sandakan, Lahad Datu and Tawau to the state's capital, Kota Kinabalu. For details contact Malaysia Airlines or the nearest travel agency. Travel from Kota Kinabalu is also possible by air-conditioned coach and mini bus, lasting approximately 8 hours per way to Tawau.

Sandakan, Lahad Datu, Semporna and Tawau are all linked by road.



*The arresting vista of  
Danum Valley at dusk*



*A spectacular sunset at Mabul Island*



# TIPS ON ECO-PARADISE.

## Climate:

Equatorial/Tropical, with occasional rain-showers

## Average Temperatures:

Lowlands – 32 degrees Centigrade.

Highlands – 21 degrees Centigrade.

## Currency:

Travellers' cheques and foreign currencies can be changed for Malaysian Ringgit at banks and hotels. Most major hotels charge a nominal fee for currency conversion.

## Major Credit and Charge Cards:

VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club

## Banking Hours:

Mondays to Fridays – 10 am till 3 pm

## Local Time:

Standard Malaysian Time is 8 hours ahead of GMT.

## Electricity:

240 volts AC/50-Cycle system

## Language:

Bahasa Malaysia is the national language. However, English is widely spoken.

## Entry Requirements:

1. A valid passport (and visa wherever applicable) is required.
2. A Social or Tourist Visit Pass does not permit the holder to take up employment, business or professional work in Malaysia.
3. The Business Visit Pass allows foreign visitors to enter the country for business negotiations or inspection of business premises. These passes however, cannot be used for employment purposes or for supervising the installation of new machinery or the construction of a factory.
4. No fee is charged for a Business Visit Pass issued for a period of up to three months. A fee of RM5 is imposed for each month thereafter.

For more information, please contact:

**Sabah Tourism Board**

or:

**The Malaysian Diplomatic Mission  
in your country,**

**Malaysia Tourism Board Offices,**

**Malaysia Airlines or your Travel Agency.**

*Tungkungon –  
a traditional  
bamboo musical  
instrument*



MAP OF SANDAKAN  
TOWN CENTRE